



Compass Treasure Hunt

Materials:

- Compass
- Length of rope, string, or twine
- Paper and pencil
- Some sort of treasure that the kid participants will enjoy, like a treat or toy

Set-up Steps:

- 1) Pick your starting spot.
- 2) Lay out the course by using a compass to head in a given direction and counting how many rope lengths to travel in that direction for. For example, the first step might be to go North for 3 rope lengths or to go 210° for 2 rope lengths. Write down the step so you don't forget!
- 3) Create your second step. (For example, you might go South for 1 rope length). Write that down. Repeat until you have 4-8 different steps for the kids to follow, writing down each step as you go.
- 4) Hide the treasure at the end of the course.
- 5) Give the kids a primer on how to use a compass (see the next page), then give them the paper directions and let them loose!

Tips:

- If you have a larger group of participants, split them up into teams of 2-3 so everyone is involved and gets a chance to use the compass.
- For younger kids, stick to the cardinal directions (North, East, South, and West). For a more challenging course, use the intermediate directions (Northeast, Southeast, etc.) or go even further and use degree bearings.
- You can also use step counts to mark how far to travel in a given direction on the course (i.e. Go 20 steps North), but this is less precise than rope lengths and may lead to difficulty finding the treasure at the end. (Plus using rope lengths requires that 2 kids hold the rope to stretch it out, involving more kids in each step).
- If you don't know how to use a compass (or need a refresher), read our how-to guide on finding a bearing below!



Background Information on Compass Bearings:

- A bearing is simply a navigationally precise way to describe a direction, and it's just based on the fact that a circle has 360°. For example, instead of going “northeast,” you might follow a bearing of 45°. Bearings are always depending on your location, meaning that following the same bearing from two different places will not get you to the same destination (i.e., telling two people that are across town from each other to both head south or 180° for 1 mile will not get them to the same destination).

How to Find a Direction Using a Compass:

- 1) Hold the compass flat in your palm with the direction of travel arrow pointing away from you.
- 2) Rotate the bezel (the circular housing) until the correct number of degrees is at the top of the bezel (at the index line). For example, if you're trying to find East, that's 90°, so you should rotate the bezel until 90° is at the top of the bezel.
- 3) Keeping the compass flat, rotate your body until the magnetized needle is inside the orienting arrow. (We tell kids to put “red in the shed,” meaning to put the red end of the needle in the shed-like line drawing in the needle housing). You are now facing the bearing you put at the top of the bezel!

